GENERAL ELECTIONS

4. My Government have made satisfactory progress in regard to the holding of elections under the new Constitution. Proposals have been formulated for the delimitation of constituencies for the House of the People and for the Legislative Assembly and they are now under the scrutiny of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee. The enumeration of voters has been completed while the printing and publishing of preliminary electoral rolls on the basis of adult franchise is expected to be completed in a month. There is a full-time officer with jurisdiction over the entire State as Chief Electoral Officer for supervision, guidance and control of the elections, and we hope to be ready to conduct the elections in time.

FOOD POSITION

5. As you are all aware, the prevailing shortage of food stuffs in the country continues to be the most pressing problem of the day. In our own State, it assumed a serious aspect in August last, when the stocks ran short and became insufficient even to meet the monthly requirements. My Government took steps to meet the crisis by tightening up procurement, obtaining paddy from rich landlords on a loan basis and by unearthing hoarded stocks. They are fully alive to the hardship which a deterioration in the stock position will cause to the general public and are taking all possible steps to prevent the recurrence of such a short crisis in the future. They have now appointed in each taluk in the Travancore area a separate full-time Tahsildar with the necessary staff to attend exclusively to procurement and distribution. They have also decided to establish Government depots in the place of private wholesalers in foodgrains and have already made a beginning in some of the centres in the State.

Controls and rationing are irksome and are at best only temporary expedients for meeting the prevailing shortage. My Government are, therefore, forging ahead with their programme of food production. Work has progressed satisfactorily on the Peechi Irrigation project, the Chalakudi project and the Perinchani scheme. Investigation has been completed in respect of the Bhoothathan project and Vadakkancheri river valley project, while the investigation of the Neyyar project and the Vembanad lake project has been taken up. Besides, my Government have taken up vigorously the programme of providing lift irrigation facilities and have sanctioned as many as 17 schemes at a cost of Rs. 15·00 lakhs for execution in 1950-51. They are arranging for the speedy execution of a number of works such as tanks, wells and canals and have taken up a scheme for the multiplication of improved seeds. They have programmed to bring under cultivation new lands in the current year.

AGRICULTURE

6. With a view to bringing about an immediate increase in the production of paddy, a scheme for intensive cultivation has been taken up. An area of 2,70,000 acres has been selected in South Travancore, Onattukara, Kuttanad, Alwaye and Trichur for intensive manuring. This measure together with the use of improved seeds and the adoption of effective methods for plant protection is expected to step up the production of paddy. Besides, an intensive drive for compost production by converting all waste into valuable manure has been undertaken, and over a thousand teachers have been given training to do propaganda work in the villages for compost production.

BACKWARD COMMUNITIES

7. My Government are continuing to devote special attention for the amelioration of the backward communities. They are assigning lands to them on an

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